



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL
ADMINISTRATOR

Dear President Bristol Bay Tribal Leader:

The EPA has revised the Draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment and we invite you to review the changes. Comments must be submitted electronically or postmarked by May 31, 2013.

The Draft Assessment formally titled, "An Assessment of Potential Mining Impacts on Salmon Ecosystems of Bristol Bay, Alaska" is helping the EPA understand the unique resources of the Bristol Bay region, and how large-scale mining could affect the salmon fishery and subsequently wildlife and Alaska Native cultures. The assessment is not a regulatory decision – it is intended to provide information to help guide future agency actions and assist others in making decisions about future large-scale mining development.

With this letter, I have enclosed a CD copy of the revised draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment and two copies of the Executive Summary. The full Draft Assessment can be viewed and downloaded by visiting www.epa.gov/bristolbay. You can also find additional information about the assessment, as well as review previous public comments on the EPA's Bristol Bay Website.

In addition to the public comment period, the EPA is available for tribal consultation and coordination. We take our tribal trust and government-to-government consultation responsibilities seriously, and hope to hear from you regarding the revisions we have made to the draft assessment. You will notice that the Draft Assessment includes information regarding Alaska Native cultures and fish related impacts on the subsistence way of life from large-scale mining activities within the Nushagak and Kvichak watersheds. You will find most of this information in Chapters 5, 12 and 13, and Appendix D of the revised Draft Assessment. Since you know your land, communities and way of life best, we look to you to make sure that we have characterized Alaskan Native cultures appropriately.

Tribal consultation and coordination has been an important on-going part of the development of the Draft Assessment. If your tribal government would like to consult with the EPA please contact Tami Fordham, Alaska Resource Extraction Tribal Policy Advisor, by email at fordham.tami@epa.gov or by phone at (907)271-1484. We will consult with tribal governments who request consultation. The EPA will also continue to coordinate with federal and state agencies, Alaska Native organizations and the public and industry as we improve and finalize The Assessment. Please contact Tami by May 14, 2013 so that we can adequately prepare and schedule any consultation meetings.

We hope you can join us for an informational webinar on the revised assessment for interested tribal governments:

When: May 14, 2013: 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM Alaska Time

Webinar Link: <https://epa.connectsolutions.com/bristolbay/>

Teleconference Number: **Nonresponsive Conference Code**

Please contact Tami Fordham if you plan to participate in our webinar presentation.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Rick Parkin, the EPA's Senior Management Lead on this project by emailing him at Parkin.Richard@epa.gov or by calling him at (206)553-8574.

I thank you for your continued involvement in this effort and look forward to working with you in finalizing this assessment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis J. McLerran", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dennis J. McLerran
Regional Administrator

Enclosed

cc: Rick Parkin, EPA
Tami Fordham, EPA
Tribal Environmental Coordinators, Bristol Bay Tribal Governments (via email)

bcc: John Herbst, EPA